

Town Names

THE HISTORY OF CONNECTICUT,

AS ILLUSTRATED BY

THE NAMES OF HER TOWNS.

A PAPER

BY

FRANKLIN B. DEXTER.

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THE HISTORY OF CONNECTICUT, AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE NAMES OF HER TOWNS.

BY FRANKLIN B. DEXTER.

THAT is a sound and suggestive sentence of Dr. Johnson's in which he declares that "Life is surely given us for higher purposes than to gather what our ancestors have wisely thrown away, and to learn what is of no value but because it has been forgotten." But while this protest against fruitless antiquarianism may be justified, it is fair to remember that in every growing community actions and motives underlying them are thrown aside and apparently forgotten, which nevertheless bear good fruit and are worth recovering, when history comes to be written, for the light they cast on the methods and aims and daily surroundings of founders of States. In this spirit I desire to trace a few of the side-lights that fall on Connecticut history from the names given in successive generations to the incorporated townships of the State.

I admit at the outset that these names betray almost no trace of the greater outward events which have been acted on the soil, almost no trace of the political struggles and divisions which have agitated the community; the themes which they illustrate are rather the force of local attachments and of national pride, and the gradual expansion of an independent people from weakness to full strength.

We shall see, too, that this absence of political color is itself full of significance, bearing direct witness to that spirit of diplomatic caution and restraint which characterized throughout the colonial history of Connecticut,—especially if viewed in contrast with the elder colony of Massachusetts.

To illustrate my meaning by a single example;—there is no doubt that our earliest settlers, busily building new homes in the wilderness in the days of successful resistance to Charles I. and of parliamentary rule in England, sympathized to the full with the new order of things there; but we search in vain for any evidence of this sympathy in the names adopted for their new abodes, as they listened to the distant echo of those victories. Meantime, in Massachusetts, the towns of Reading, and Hull, and Manchester, received their names in prompt commemoration of Parliamentary successes; and I take it that the omission of a like commemoration in Connecticut was studied, not accidental, and is expressive of a slightly different attitude from that of Massachusetts towards English authority.

In the study of history the things left undone and unattempted are sometimes as instructive and as significant as the things actually done or aimed at.

But if we are not to look for any marked display of party feeling or reference to passing interests, in this connection, what other guiding principle remains to be discovered? The answer is easily anticipated, that the names with which the emigrants from Old England were familiar at home were the chief source of supply for the new localities; we should expect this to some extent; yet I doubt if we are prepared at first thought for the remarkable attachment shown in this method for the old home. Remember that only four or five years after 1637, when the General Assembly of Connecticut named its first batch of towns (Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield), emigration from Old England to New England came comparatively to a stand-still, in the near prospect of Puritan ascendancy at home, and was not renewed to any considerable extent until within the last century;—and yet, for a hundred years following 1637, more than two-thirds of the names bestowed on the successive new townships and parishes in this colony were faithful reproductions of English originals.

Or, to extend the comparison to a longer period, it may well surprise us to find that out of almost exactly one hundred names given by public authority to prospective townships in this State, before the Declaration of Independence, at least fifty-seven were taken directly from British sources; if I have counted aright, seventeen of the remainder were owing to obvious peculiarities of natural location (as Waterbury, Middlefield), ten were mere variations or combinations of already existing names, usually by geographical adjuncts (as East Haddam, North Haven), eight were of Biblical origin, three were from names of Americans, founders or early settlers, two were borrowed from names in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, and the remaining three can hardly be classified.

The comparative looseness of the tie binding Connecticut during all these years to the mother country is evidenced by the fact that for the same period in the two elder colonies of Virginia and Massachusetts, the proportion of place-names from English sources was far greater than with us.

The general conclusions may be made more clear by taking instances in detail, and for this purpose the history may be separated into a few well-marked periods.

And first, it is enough to mention the fact that in the earliest period, that extending down to 1665, there were two entirely distinct colonies existing within the territory of the present State of Connecticut.

The elder, a direct outgrowth from the colony of Massachusetts Bay, had migrated in three bands (which live before us to this day in the three vines on the seal of the State) to the towns of Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield, in the Connecticut Valley. It had borrowed from that valley the musical Indian name of Connecticut, which means "beside the long tidal river," and forming a combination with the fort planted at the river's mouth, Saybrook, by the agent of some London proprietors, had increased at

the date mentioned, 1665, to a dozen plantations (of which Hartford was the capital), most of them still on or near the river, but others (Norwalk, Fairfield, Stratford, New London) ranging in either direction along the line of the Sound. Moreover a few less organized settlements beyond these, towards what is now New York, and a larger number on the Long Island shore, had owned allegiance to Connecticut.

As a whole, the colony was of pure English blood, homogeneous therefore, thrifty, orderly, and religious, not so much under the control of a few autocratic leaders as its model, Massachusetts Bay, but exhibiting a more simple democracy, with a nearer resemblance in some essential points to the modern spirit than we find in either of its chief contemporaries.

The second of the two colonies within the present State limits, had its centre at, and took its name from New Haven, its first town, in time, in numbers, and importance; it embraced also the neighboring Guilford, Branford and Milford, together with Stamford and Greenwich (separated from the rest by some of the Connecticut settlements), and last of all, Southold on the opposite Long Island shore.

This colony, though organized by men of high religious character and of abundant pecuniary resources, had been unfortunate in all its history. Unfortunate at first in the time of its beginning, transplanted at a date when the hope of Puritan England was all on this side the Atlantic, but scarcely set in operation when the turn of public affairs at home concentrated on that side the water all the Puritan interest, New Haven especially suffered from this withdrawal of expected immigration and capital, while Massachusetts Bay, already firmly rooted by ten years of unprecedented growth, and the Hartford colony, its healthy offshoot, were better equipped for meeting such a crisis. Later on, disastrous commercial ventures, embroilment

with their Dutch neighbors, and a certain uncompromising rigidity of Puritanism, which reached its culmination here, and which after the Restoration challenged inevitably the interference of the English government,—these and kindred incidents marked the feeble colony for early extinction.

A reference to the map for the location of each, will show, perhaps more clearly than any explanation of their different development, how predestined was the absorption of the younger and weaker colony by the elder and stronger one at Hartford.

Meantime, however, each had its quarter of a century and more of separate growth, in which New Haven stood sponsor to seven future townships, and Connecticut to twelve;—the population and the wealth of the two sections being about in the same ratio.

But it is time to return from this digression to individual cases of town-names in these first groups.

The name of New Haven itself may be thought to present as much difficulty as any other of the entire list, for the theory of an English origin is hardly in this case satisfactory. So far as we can tell, none of the prominent inhabitants of 1640 (when the name was given) had come from the little fishing village of the same name, and the only one in England, just rising into notice as a convenient harbor on the coast of Sussex, though now familiar enough to modern travellers as the terminus of a line of Channel steamers. Sussex contributed but few to the New England emigration, and we are not sure that even a single one of the first comers to this town was of the Sussex quota. The fact remains, that the plantation after being called for two and a half years from the arrival of the main body of settlers by its Indian name of Quinnipiac (“long-water-country”), received in September, 1640, the name New Haven by an order of the General Court. The fact is also preserved—in a letter of John Davenport’s, written in 1639, on the first coming of a ship direct from England—

that the ship's captain was so well pleased with the harbor, that he called it the Fair Haven, but there is no clear connection between this incident and the essentially different name first occurring over a year later.

Apparently the two adjoining settlements had, before the name New Haven came into use, begun to be called Guilford and Milford;—the former, I suppose, at the instance of William Chittenden, one of its principal pillars, who came from the neighborhood of Guilford on the borders of Sussex and Kent, and the latter perhaps more because the first *mill* of the region was already built there, at a convenient *ford*, than in reminiscence of any of the numerous Milfords in the old country; if, however, one of those familiar Milfords was thought of, it was most likely Milford Haven, the prominent seaport of south-western Wales, abreast of the entrance to Bristol Channel, and so the last harbor which emigrants direct from Herefordshire, as our Milford people mainly were, would have taken leave of, as they sailed out into the West.

It is possible, now that *Guilford* having been thus named, the location of the English port of New Haven, on the Sussex coast, a little westward from the original Guilford, may have suggested the appropriation of the same name for our harbor, correspondently located with respect to the new Guilford. I know of no better reason to give, except the obvious reason, which was in any case a strong one, namely, the inherent fitness of the name as a descriptive one, a *New Haven*, like the reason which induced the settlers on Rhode Island a year earlier to adopt the name of Newport.

Of the other plantations of this colony, Greenwich no doubt borrowed its name from that of the royal residence on the Thames, and Stamford was a namesake of the ancient town on the borders of Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, while the musical Indian form Totoket (the last syllables of which are the same with those in the name of

the Connecticut), after holding its own for ten years or more, was finally replaced by Branford, the popular corruption of Brentford, a London suburb on the Thames opposite Kew. Southold, the one plantation on Long Island which came under our jurisdiction, was a name common enough in England, and perhaps chosen here partly for geographical reasons. This exhausts the roll of the New Haven Colony, but we find the same rule of English names in the Connecticut territory.

There the list is headed by Hartford, commemorating the charming old town of Hertford, twenty miles due north from London, the birthplace of Samuel Stone, one of the two ministers of the new settlement. At the same time were named Windsor and Wethersfield,—the one evidently from the famous site of the customary residence of the sovereigns of England, and the other as evidently from the little town of the same name in the county of Essex, from the neighborhood of which came John Talcott, one of the most prominent among the proprietors of the new plantation.

To these were next added Stratford, a name like Greenwich and Branford, in reminiscence of a familiar suburb of London, Stratford-at-Bow, and Saybrook, in which is comprehended a fuller chapter of Connecticut history than in any other single name that we shall meet. It takes us back to 1632, before the emigration to Hartford and Windsor, and recalls the formation in that year of a company in England for developing the rich valley of the Connecticut. Of this company the foremost members were two of the most prominent among the Puritan nobility,—Viscount Say and Sele, and Baron Brooke,—with whom were joined Lord Rich, the heir of the powerful Earl of Warwick, and such commoners as Pym, and Hampden, and Humfrey, a son-in-law of the Earl of Lincoln. These lords and gentlemen intended presently to transport a supply of Puritan colonists to the unsettled territory, but on finding volunteer

colonization, of such stuff and with such motives as met their approval, begun in Hartford and the neighborhood, they willingly waived their contingent rights, for a large pecuniary consideration, and so it happens that the name of Say-Brook, given in honor of the two chief promoters of the company, Lords Say and Brooke, to the fort erected by their order at the mouth of the river, is now the company's only memorial.

An era of manifestly descriptive names was introduced in 1645, when a new town made out of the farms in the back country belonging to Hartford people, was called Farmington; so Fair-field was named the next year, and so Middle-Town in 1653, as the earliest connecting link between Saybrook and the up-river settlements. Norwalk, in 1650, has usually been associated with these, by being said to commemorate a purchase from the natives of territory measured by one day's *North-walk* from the Sound, but the orthography used in the early appearances of the name does not favor this explanation, and common sense rejects it; it is almost certainly Indian, modified by English lips.

In 1653 the oldest plantation east of the Connecticut river, in which Governor Winthrop was the chief inhabitant, known hitherto by its Indian name of Pequot, received the name of New London,—the Governor improving the occasion to spread upon the records the reason for the change under the “commendable practice of all the Colonies of these parts, that as this Country hath its denomination from our dear native Country of England, and thence is called New England, so the planters, in their first settling of most new plantations, have given names to those plantations of some cities and towns in England, thereby intending to keep up and leave to posterity the memorial of several places of note there, as Boston, Hartford, Windsor,” &c.; and so New London supplanted Pequot, the one name which would have fitly handed down

the remembrance of the Pequot tribe and the Pequot war, the greatest tragedy enacted on Connecticut soil under European domination.

By the same rule, a few months later, when another plantation was laid out to the northward of New London, it took the name of "Norridge," that particular name being perhaps suggested by the geographical position of the new settlement, it being much the same in relation to the other as the original Norwich to the original London; it is not ascertained that any of the early inhabitants were from Norwich in Old England.

One more locality in the colony had received a permanent name before the close of this period, though not erected into a town for more than a century later; I refer to Meriden, which was settled and named as early as 1664 by Andrew Belcher, of Boston, whose family came originally from Meriden or Miriden, a little village near Coventry, in Warwickshire, which was so named in accurate description of its location, that is, in a *miry dene*, dene being old English for valley.

This ends our survey of the ante-union period, except for notice of the fact that Rye, on the debatable border between the Colony of Connecticut and the Province of New York, was named by the former authority from the English port of that name in Sussex. Of course some other places, also, not yet fully settled, were already locally known by various names which did not prove permanent; such for instance was Mystic, in the territory east of New London, which Massachusetts had pretended to annex, calling it Southertown, which later grew into the modern Stonington.

We come next to the consolidation of the two separate colonies into one, and though it be two hundred and twenty years ago, New Haven has not even yet forgotten the dismay with which she learned in 1662 that the restored King had granted a charter to the Hartford people, putting

under their authority all the territory which they could get hold of, from the Rhode Island boundary westward to the Pacific. In the beginning the New Haven government had scrupulously bought out the Indian title to their lands, but had failed of securing a confirmation of this title by a grant from the authority of England, which claimed the sovereign right to the disposal of all the Atlantic coast by virtue of discovery. The unequal struggle of the two colonies could have but one termination. Connecticut had acquired a legal title to the New Haven lands, superior, that is to say, in the eye of English law, to that of the planters themselves. If these planters should decline to submit to her, she might not indeed coerce them, but they were without friends at court, and it was broadly threatened that nothing could in that case avert a still greater evil,—annexation to New York, whose proprietor would not hesitate to establish his authority by force of arms;—and so, after three years of impotent delay, Connecticut found herself acknowledged mistress of all the territory since known as hers.

In explanation of the reluctance with which the older public men of New Haven accepted the issue, it should be said that it meant to them not merely the disappearance of a separate experiment of government, of which they had had control, and the entering of other men into their labors, but much more, the humiliation of a colony which had been founded in church fellowship, and which had aimed at a specially high religious standard in its laws and discipline, and had exhibited the purest ideal of union of church and state, henceforth to be a subordinate portion of another colony, certainly never so strict in profession,—for instance not exacting *any* religious qualifications of its voters,—and just now, in particular, thought too complaisant in its attitude towards the English throne. But the apprehension was worse than the reality. In fact, the second era of our history stretches through a vista of comfortable prosperity from this union to the severance

from England in 1776. With a charter from the King which secured to her people the entire control of the government, Connecticut was complete within herself, and without motive for interest or intrigue beyond her own domain. The effect was, that she prudently kept in the background the subject of relations with the mother-country, and was practically independent of England, long before the other colonies had reached the point of desiring separation.

The same principles, however, in the choice of names for newly gathered communities, continued to hold. But naturally, the further we are from the source of the stream, the harder it will be to trace its descent; it is still possible, nevertheless, to show that the majority of these names repeated to a new generation those which were familiar to their ancestors in the old country. I may not delay for more than a few of the specially striking examples. But I may point out, for instance, that it adds to the interest with which we pass the name of *Killingworth*, to remember that Edward Griswold, pioneer of Englishmen on that ground, was born in Kenilworth, in Warwickshire, and that the form of the name which we use (though a complete disguise of the original meaning, a manor by the canal or ditch) is still the familiar corruption among the peasants of the English neighborhood. The original petition for a town, in 1667, preserved in the State Library, in the handwriting of the minister of the parish, John Woodbridge, spells the name "Kenelmeworth." It is a pity, by the way, that by the modern regulations in this State for the division of towns, the name Killingworth, after having served for one hundred and seventy years to designate the original settlement on the shore of the Sound, had to be transferred,—when that part of the town petitioned for a division,—to a remote back country parish, while the continuity of history was broken by attaching to a locality so long associated with the early English emigration, the bran-new name of Clinton.

Like these Griswolds in Killingworth, and the Talcotts in Wethersfield, many other of our historic houses have recorded indelibly on the map of Connecticut their English origin. Thus the estates which the family of John Haynes, the first Governor of Connecticut, owned at Great Hadham in Hertfordshire, suggested a name for our Haddam. Thus, again, Groton was named during the governorship of Fitz-John Winthrop, out of respect to the Suffolk country-seat of his distinguished family, and not at all unlikely is it that Colchester, the first town to be named after his accession to the chief magistracy, owed its appellation to the fact that the English Colchester is the nearest town of any considerable size to Groton. Tradition adds that he gave its name to Canterbury also, near the same date, in honor of the great cathedral city of eastern England.

Similarly, when Governor Winthrop was succeeded by Governor Saltonstall, it was only natural that the manor of Killingly, near Pontefract, in Yorkshire, owned by the Saltonstall family, should be honored in the name of a new town, and that Pontefract itself should also be reproduced, in the colloquial form of Pomfret. Possibly also Bolton, named during the same term of office, may have been a reminiscence of Bolton Abbey, one of the famous sights of the same English neighborhood.

So, again, tradition reports that Durham in England was the home of the Wadsworth family, and that thus their prominent share in the settlement of our Durham suggested its name.

So, too, Tolland and Willington commemorate two Somersetshire villages, in one of which was born and in the other lived that Henry Wolcott who came to America in 1630, and whose grandson, Governor Roger Wolcott, was the chief patentee almost a century later of these two new towns in Tolland county. It may be mentioned that the orthography in the case of the younger of these towns was at first usually Wellington, as was that of its English

prototype, which has the honor of having given a title to the conqueror of Waterloo.

Once more, the Ripley family was among a company of emigrants from Hingham, in Norfolk, who originally settled the town of Hingham, in Massachusetts Bay, and when descendants bearing the same family name pushed out into the Connecticut wilderness and founded a new town, naturally they chose for it the name of Windham, dear to their fathers' ears as the customary pronunciation of Wymondham, the largest place within the immediate vicinity of Old Hingham, on the eastern coast of England.

The most recent that I can suggest, of these instances of a family tradition being strong enough to dictate a choice of name, is the case of Salisbury, which as late as 1738 took a name meant, I think, to remind us that the chief original proprietor, the Rev. Moses Noyes, of Lyme, was the son of a native of a little village in Wiltshire, in the near neighborhood of the city of Salisbury.

These may suffice as examples, but we run little risk in saying that it is only our ignorance of family history among the first comers that stands in the way of our finding similar reasons for the reappearance here of such obscure English village names as Simondsbury, colloquially Simsbury, in Dorsetshire, Danbury in Essex, Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire, the birthplace of the poet Cowper, and Torrington and Hartland in Devonshire,—though possibly this last may be descriptive of land colonized from Hartford.

Of less value as indicating directions in which the future genealogist may work, yet not perhaps altogether without promise, are the names of larger English towns or cities which we have copied, such as Lyme and Wallingford, Preston and Derby, Glastonbury, Stafford and Wilton, Litchfield and Coventry, Chester and Winchester.

In some of the later instances in which a well-known English name is conferred on a remote country parish,—as for instance when the inaccessible hill district in New

Haven County was called Oxford, in 1741,—it is idle to conclude either that there was a family tradition connecting the two localities, or that there was hope of a career which should recall the lustre of the English exemplar. The selection merely testifies to a natural recurrence on the part of descendants, proud of the heritage of English glory, to the names which filled so large a share of English history.

Occasionally a sentimental reason has been assigned for the choice. Thus Newington parish (afterwards made a town) is said to have been named in 1718, out of respect to the residence in Stoke-Newington, a London suburb, of the excellent Dr. Watts, whose hymns, first published eleven years before, had already begun to be known and admired in America; but this explanation is not free from difficulties.

And thus Chatham is said, in 1767, to have been named in fond anticipation that its future shipyards might rival in importance the Royal Dockyard of Chatham, in Kent; at the same time it is fair to suppose that the authorities could read in this case between the lines, and allow a special fitness in the name, at a time when William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, was the popular hero of America, because of his stand against the alleged right of Parliament to tax the colonies. That this sentiment might have inspired the name is suggested also by the petition received in the next year for a town in Windham County, to be called Wilkes-Barre, by a combination of the names of two other outspoken English friends of American liberty. The petition, as it happened, was refused, though probably not on account of the name proposed; but emigrants from the same region of Windham County, within a few years from this date, who engaged in the wild crusade for the possession of the Wyoming Valley, in northeastern Pennsylvania, planted there a living memorial of the incident, by naming in 1775 the still flourishing town of Wilkes-Barre.

Sometimes, as in connection with the apportionment into

new townships of the further part of Litchfield County, in 1738,—the last section of the State to be laid out and settled,—the names of larger divisions of the old country, as Norfolk, Kent, and Cornwall, were made use of; so, earlier, we have the infelicitous application of Cheshire (that is Chester-shire, the County of Chester) to a country village; and even of Scotland to one of the least populous towns in the State, so named about 1700 by its earliest inhabitant, a Scoteluman by birth; so, too, in 1754, in one of the latest efforts of vanishing loyalty, the parish of *New Britain* was ambitiously set off from Farmington. This leads to the remark that expressions of loyalty to the British Crown and of compliment to the British Court, in the shape of names of places, were in Connecticut conspicuous by their absence. No one need ask for clearer testimony to the main facts of the Colony's relations to England than is furnished by the silent witness of her town-roll; and the lesson may be pointed by contrast with Massachusetts, with which comparison is natural, because of the apparent similarity in forms of government. Yet how great was the actual difference, and how really was that Colony controlled under its second charter by the mother country, let this fact show,—that of the names of towns given in Massachusetts in just the half-century before the Revolution, at least forty per cent. are distinctly derived from the names or titles or residences of members of the royal family or courtiers and placemen. So that this portion of the roll of Massachusetts townships¹ reads somewhat like a leaf out of the peerage, with its Hanover, Lunenburg, Shrewsbury, Bedford, Halifax, Pelham, Hardwick, Granville, Chesterfield, Shelburne, and so on; while by way of counterpart, Connecticut has absolutely nothing to show, unless it be the single instance of Somers, a town originally

¹ See Mr. W. H. Whitmore's elaborate paper on the "Origin of the Names of Towns in Massachusetts," in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society for February, 1873, pp. 393-419.

named by Massachusetts, and later transferred to this Colony in the straightening of the boundary line. Perhaps I ought also to state that in 1761 a new parish formed out of Norwich, by the General Court, was called Hanover, possibly a tribute of respect to the reigning house; Hanover Parish, however, never gave name to a town.

The mention of Somers reminds me that there was little worship of heroes, whether native or foreign, in the New Englander of that day if left to himself, least of all in Connecticut, which had been sharply distinguished from the mother colony of Massachusetts Bay in its earliest years by its democratic equality and the comparative absence of a group of leaders with high family connections at home.

Naturally then, we find here no conspicuous attempts, as in Baltimore and New York and Albany, to preserve the fame of titled owners; nor any Jamestown, nor Charleston, nor Annapolis, in honor of reigning princes; just as the colony itself did not draw its name from the person or the position of its proprietors, as did Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire; nor like Virginia and Carolina, Maryland and Georgia, from royal godfathers and godmothers.

It was natural enough, however, that in a simpler way the zeal of individuals in opening up unbroken tracts of land should be emphasized, as when the new town of Mansfield was named in 1702 in honor of Major Moses Mansfield, one of its largest proprietors. So Reading Parish in 1729 got its name from Col. John Read, the principal settler, though local tradition now asserts that by the time a town charter was applied for, thirty-eight years later, the unpopularity of Col. Read was such that the people voted distinctly that the name to be asked for should be, not Reading but Redding. Thompson in 1730 was named from an early English landholder, Sir Robert Thompson, a devoted friend of the colonies, whose family owned a good

part of the township until after 1800. Ellington Parish, though the name is common in Old England, is said to have been so called in 1735, in allusion to the Ellsworth family, as among the principal owners of the district.

The question may be asked here whether the English towns which were the originals of our town names, group themselves in such a way upon the map as to throw any light on the general question of the distribution of emigrations from England to Connecticut. In other words, do these inquiries help us to know from what parts of England Connecticut was peopled? It may be said in reply that the conclusions to be drawn from these data all tend to corroborate the existing information as to Connecticut stock. What this stock usually was, the experience of the nucleus of the New Haven Colony well illustrates; the first settlers in the town of New Haven represented at least three distinct neighborhoods,—one part from London, one from Kent, and one from Yorkshire,—the last colonizing in the quarter which our modern "York Street" marks. Guilford was mainly settled from Surrey and Kent, and Milford from Herefordshire in the west. Here we have then a mingling of streams, from the metropolis, the south-eastern counties, the distant north-east, and the western midland; and this partial view is typical of the whole. In populating Connecticut, not only London and the eastern counties, but in less degree the southwest, the midland, the northeast, all bore their part, and all contributed their fair share to our treasury of town names.

I pass on to other classes of names in the same pre-Revolutionary period. Those suggested by natural peculiarities of soil or landscape need detain us but a moment. Occasionally, as in Roxbury or Brooklyn, the spelling may slightly disguise the original form, but in general such descriptive terms as Stonington and Ashford, Woodbury and Waterbury, Plainfield, Ridgefield, and Rocky Hill, all of which are names originating in New England, are self-

explanatory. Brooklyn was of course at first Brook-line and has nothing whatever in common with the pretty Dutch village of Brenekelen, near Utrecht, which gave its name, meaning "marsh-land," to the City of Churches, opposite New York.

Among our descriptive names is Suffield, which Connecticut acquired from Massachusetts in 1749, with Woodstock, Enfield, and Somers, by the straightening of boundary lines, and which was originally named in 1674 Southfield, with geographical reference to Springfield, as Westfield was, it being, as the record of the Massachusetts General Court runs, "the southernmost town that either at present is or is like to be in that country." Enfield, its neighbor on the east, founded nine years later, seems, however, to have had its name from the English Enfield, a northern suburb of London, and not from its being the "End" of this group of "Field" towns. In general the scrutiny of these descriptive appellations should make us well content that this was not the favorite principle under which the colony was developed; it is not decrying the fathers of Connecticut to admit that they lacked the graceful, active imagination which has brought such a system to perfection among other peoples of a warmer blood.

Again, the derivatives from names already existing in the Colony present no difficulty. It should be noted, however, that this class of names affords disappointingly little insight into the movements of population; only three towns, two in Litchfield County and one in Fairfield County, bear names which certainly indicate such sources of colonization, New Milford, settled from Milford in 1703, New Fairfield (1728), and New Hartford (1733); besides these, the town of Salem, in New London County, was so called out of respect to Col. Samuel Brown, of Salem, Mass., a great landholder in the parish when it was named in 1728; and the town of Andover, in Tolland County, is said to have received its name in 1747, in compliment to the emigration

of some of its early inhabitants from Andover in Massachusetts. There are also a number of derivatives which merely indicate the geographical partition of a formerly undivided territory; the earliest of these is East Haven, set off in 1707, but long before known as a village by the same name. The composite name of Harwinton was given in 1732 to a new township formed from portions of Hartford, Windsor and Farmington, each name contributing a syllable to the new designation. Many *parish* names have at different times been similarly constructed, though none of these parishes have attained the rank of separate towns; thus Hadlyme, carved out of Haddam and Lyme, Winsted, from Winchester and Barkhamsted, and Stratfield, the parish between Stratford and Fairfield, which later took the natural name of Bridgeport.

Another distinct class is that of Biblical names, introduced by Lebanon, which was in use as early as 1695, before town privileges were applied for. It may be doubted whether there was any attempt in these at special etymological or historical adaptation, though Goshen may be good pasture land, and Sharon abound in rich verdure. Between 1697 and 1762, and chiefly towards the later date, Connecticut named in this manner eight of her towns, besides several parts of towns or parishes. The fact accords with a certain devoutness of temperament and familiar recourse to Scripture, not out of place in a generation which was stirred to its depths by the revival preaching of Edwards and Whitefield. In most of these cases it is clear that the names did not originate with the residents of the districts, but with the General Assembly or other officials. It is a curious fact that Massachusetts, which we are wont to think of as the ideal Puritan Colony, shows in her entire history but three Biblical names in her list of towns; Salem in 1630, Rehoboth (in Plymouth Colony) in 1645, and Sharon in 1765.

Under the classes now enumerated are included all the

names given down to the Revolution, save two exceptional cases, Voluntown, a unique name manufactured in 1708 to denote the land granted by the Colony to the volunteer soldiers of New London County, who had taken such effective part in Philip's war and in the consequent conquest of the Narragansett Indians; and Union, so named in 1782. For the latter name I have no explanation to offer, unless it is to be interpreted by comparison with the names given within a dozen years earlier and later to the various parishes of Unity, New Concord, and Amity, which never became town names. I conjecture that in all these cases there lurks a reference to a combination of disconnected families of immigrants for a common purpose of settlement.

With the outbreak of the Revolution, we enter on a new period in the treatment of town nomenclature, and if we lose the controlling English influence, it is to substitute in a slightly less emphatic degree an American standard. One-third the names given in this period are descriptive of situation or derivatives from existing names, and an equal portion were given in honor of Americans either nationally or locally renowned. Names taken from English localities are not wholly wanting. Bristol, Hampton, and Essex may perhaps be such; Manchester and Portland certainly are so, with a clear reference to the trade in Manchester cottons and silks, and in Portland stone, as reproduced in the new world; a similar principle prompted the name of the borough of Birmingham. Berlin, Lisbon, Canton and Darien among towns, and Baltic and Hamburg among parishes, are witnesses to the widening of the horizon by foreign travel and commercial ventures. The names of Hauden, assigned by the Assembly in place of Mount Carmel, in 1786, and Cromwell, of so late a date as 1851, were evidently borrowed from the annals of the English revolution of 1640; so Orange, in 1822, was distinctly given in honor of the hero of the revolution of 1689. The same spirit which dictated these selections, exulting in the

triumphs of the Revolution, gave us the towns of Washington in 1779, of Franklin and Warren in 1786, of Columbia in 1804, of Vernon (from Mount Vernon) in 1808, and of Putnam in 1855. A kindred spirit, that which does honor to the leading official characters of the nation, gave us Monroe in 1823, during President Monroe's administration; while the next town to be incorporated, three years later, bore the name of Madison. Strangely enough, in the light of the political history of the State, these were not accompanied by any like tribute to the greater leader of the party dear to Connecticut, President Jefferson. With respect for the great men of the nation, there is sure to be fostered also respect for the eminent men of the individual State; and our roll worthily commemorates such statesmen as Sherman, and such Governors as Trumbull and Griswold and Huntington and Wolcott and Seymour. A number of towns, as might be expected, preserve the names of local celebrities. Such are Woodbridge and Brookfield, named from their first ministers, Benjamin Woodbridge and Thomas Brooks; Sterling, from a temporary resident, Dr. John Sterling, who made in 1794 an offer, never fulfilled, to give a public library, if he might be thus commemorated; Chaplin, from Deacon Benjamin Chaplin, who endowed the church in that parish; Ledyard, from a former proprietor of the district, and from the noted traveller, John Ledyard, a native of the soil; Morris, from the well-known Litchfield family of that name; and Sprague and Thomaston, from the capitalists who developed the manufacturing resources of those communities.

We are limiting our inquiry to incorporated towns; as every one sees, however, the parishes or boroughs in Connecticut have often eclipsed in importance and repute the towns proper in which they are found. And of course a large number of these local business centres of modern growth hand down the names of the men or the families who have promoted them; thus we have Ansonia, from

Anson G. Phelps of New York, Jewett City, Collinsville, Plantsville, Danielsonville, and so on.

The habit of naming from points of natural scenery and from geographical relation to other places has continued during the post-Revolutionary period, giving a large number of appellations, as a rule not at all interesting. There are a few graphic exceptions, such as Prospect and Bloomfield. Fortunately the list is disfigured by only one hybrid compound, that is, only one in which the several parts are evidently taken from different languages; the exception, and that as recent as 1869, is Plainville, heretofore locally known as the Great Plain. The single other instance in which this termination appears is in Montville, where both parts are French, and where the meaning, "hill-residence," not only describes appropriately the elevated situation, but has a covert reference to the family name of the first pastor of the flock, the Rev. James *Hillhouse*, a name made memorable to New Haven also, through a line of his descendants.

Under date of 1844 appears the only Indian name besides Norwalk borne by a Connecticut town, that of Naugatuck. We do well to regret that so many of the euphonious syllables which preceded all names of our choosing on this soil have been thought unworthy of formal adoption; the only recompense must lie in their retention to mark lesser local divisions, some of which are as familiarly known as any towns; so we have Willimantic, Mystic, Niantic, Montowese, CosCob and a long catalogue of others. In this matter of esteem for Indian terminology, Connecticut showed herself less conservative than any other of the colonies; to recur to Massachusetts for comparison, there Scituate in the Plymouth Colony was the sole example until 1762; then before the Revolution we find Natick, Marshpee, and Cohasset, reinforced in later times by half a dozen more.

In the entire Connecticut list there is no name derived

from classical literature; the pervading influence of the College did not encourage any such affectations as have disfigured, for instance, central New York, with its Ovid and Tully, its Marathon and Pharsalia, its Delphi and Tyre, its Romulus and Pompey, and a host of others.

There are only two names in our list which allow any suspicion of a sentimental origin; these are Union, already mentioned, and Avon, named in 1830 by some admirer of the bard of Avon. It is a proof perhaps of the more sober and prosaic nature of Connecticut pioneers, that they did not emulate Roger Williams in that sublime touch of religious sentiment in which he gave his city of refuge the name of Providence; a generation, however, which coined or adopted the beautiful name of Fairfield cannot have been wholly wanting in the poetic sense.

I may add a word as to the relative responsibility of the town itself and the Colony authorities for the names actually given. In earlier times the evidence goes to show that the preferences of the settlers in a new place had the controlling influence, while for the later Colonial period the central power had much more to do with determining the selection. Yet there were exceptions enough to point a striking contrast to the experience of Massachusetts. There, after the original charter was set aside, in 1684, the colony became a province in the full sense of the original distinction of those words; the volunteer settlement became a conquered outpost of England, and a race of royal governors left their broad mark on the vanquished territory in a monotonous series of derivatives from courtiers and politicians, to which as I have said before Connecticut, with her governors always chosen by popular election, has no parallel. In the ordinary run of cases, probably, the choice of a name was left to the governor. When the inhabitants, as rarely happened after the earliest years, expressed a preference, it was usually respected. Occasionally, however, just often enough to keep alive the

knowledge of their right to do so, the authorities exercised even in such cases the power of decision. Thus, in 1687, the primitive settlers of what we know as Danbury petitioned for town-privileges, requesting the name of Swamp-field, and perhaps it may be thought to imply an Essex origin for the family of the then Governor, Robert Treat, that in rejecting as he did the prosaic compound which the people asked for, he substituted a village name familiar to none but an Essex man, though full of suggestion to him of Dane-bury, the ancient encampment of the Danish invader in that shire of eastern England. Again, a generation later, in 1720, when a petition came in from the scattered farmers of what had been locally known, sometimes as Hartford Mountains, sometimes as Hanover, that they should be set off as a town and called Hanover, the Assembly, or more properly Governor Saltonstall himself, discarded the proposed name, which might well have seemed like an obtrusive attempt to profess allegiance to the house lately seated on the British throne, and assigned instead the colorless name of Bolton. The incident is quite in keeping with the favorite attitude of Connecticut towards the mother country, putting in the background as much as possible the relation between them. Another instance of these interferences with the avowed will of the petitioning inhabitants, is in the case of a part of Norwich, which in 1786 sent a request to be made into a town by the name of Bath, but Bozrah was preferred by the Assembly. The floating tradition, which I give for what it is worth, is that the change was in consequence of some one's observing the particolored homespun suit worn by the rustic messenger who offered the petition, and slipantly reciting the solemn apostrophe of the Hebrew prophet: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" Whether the explanation is correct or not, certain it is that the name originally presented was stricken out and another conferred, at a time when Biblical names had ceased to be

the fashion for such purposes in Connecticut, and one which has so little to commend it that it is one of the few of our town names which remain unique, not duplicated in the lists of any of the newer States.

It would require a closer study of the currents of population for the last fourscore years than I have been able to give, to show exhaustively how the dispersion of the sons of Connecticut has dotted the wide continent with the old town-names and with others derived from honored families of the State. Not only on the Western Reserve in Ohio do Norwalk and Saybrook, New London and New Haven, Lyme and Danbury, Cleveland and Painesville, Canfield and Tallmadge, and a multitude of other names, hand down the record of the first peopling of that region as "New Connecticut." Later emigrations to further distances have kept repeating the same process, and just as the forefathers made old Connecticut a guide-book to those English hamlets which they held in brightest remembrance, so the descendants, inheriting their enterprise as pioneers, have made of new homes all over the west and south-west speaking memorials of the State of their birth; and herein, though it be in a sense which no prophet or statesman foresaw, is fulfilled the bold promise of the charter which his gracious majesty King Charles II. magnificently, if ignorantly, gave in 1662, providing that his loyal Colony of Connecticut should run for the future from the Narragansett river on the east, westward—westward still, across the continent to the Pacific Sea!

APPENDIX.

A LIST is subjoined of the 167 incorporated towns in Connecticut, chronologically arranged according to the dates of the first use of their names, so far as the present writer is informed. The supposed origin of the names is indicated in parentheses, or by figures, with the following meaning:—1, from localities in England and other foreign countries; 2, from personal names; 3, from other American localities, especially in Connecticut; 4, from peculiarities of natural situation; 5, from the Bible.

1637, Hartford, 1.	1674, Woodbury, 4.
1637, Wethersfield, 1.	1675, Derby, 1.
1637, Windsor, 1.	1683, Enfield, 1.
1639, Saybrook, 2.	1686, Waterbury, 4.
1639, Milford, 4 or 1.	1687, Preston, 1.
1639, Guilford, 1.	1687, Danbury, 1.
1640, New Haven, 4.	1690, Woodstock, 1.
1640, Greenwich, 1.	1691, Windham, 1.
1642, Stamford, 1.	1692, Glastonbury, 1.
1643, Stratford, 1.	1695, Lebanon, 5.
1645, Farmington, 4.	1699, Colchester, 1.
1646, Fairfield, 4.	1700, Plainfield, 4.
1650, Norwalk (Indian).	1702, Mansfield, 2.
1653, Branford, 1.	1703, Canterbury, 1.
1653, Middletown, 4.	1703, New Milford, 3.
1658, New London, 1.	1704, Durham, 1.
1659, Norwich, 1.	1705, Groton, 1.
1664, Meriden, 1.	1706, Scotland, 1.
1666, Stonington, 4.	1707, East Haven, 3.
1667, Killingworth, 1.	1707, Hebron, 5.
1667, Lyme, 1.	1708, Voluntown (see above, p. 22).
1668, Haddam, 1.	1708, Newtown, 1.(?)
1670, Wallingford, 1.	1708, Killingly, 1.
1670, Shimsbury, 1.	1709, Ridgefield, 4.
1674, Sudfield, 4.	1710, Ashford, 4.

- 1711, Coventry, 1.
 1713, Pomfret, 1.
 1715, Tolland, 1.
 1718, East Haddam, 3.
 1718, Stafford, 1.
 1718, Newington, 1.
 1718, Rocky Hill, 4.
 1719, Litchfield, 1.
 1720, Bolton, 1.
 1724, North Stonington, 3.
 1724, Cheshire, 1.
 1725, Willington, 1.
 1726, Wilton, 1.
 1726, Southington, 4.
 1726, [New] Salem, 3.
 1728, New Fairfield, 3.
 1729, Redding, 2.
 1730, Thompson, 2.
 1731, Southbury, 3.
 1731, New Canaan, 5.
 1732, Torrington, 1.
 1732, Barkhamsted, 1.
 1732, Colebrook, 1.
 1732, Harwinton, 3.
 1732, Union (see above, p. 25).
 1733, Hartland, 1 or 3.
 1733, Winchester, 1.
 1733, New Hartford, 3.
 1734, Somers, 2.
 1735, Ellington, 2.(?)
 1738, Norfolk, 1.
 1738, Goshen, 5.
 1738, Canaan, 5.
 1738, Cornwall, 1.
 1738, Kent, 1.
 1738, Salisbury, 1.
 1739, North Haven, 3.
 1739, Bethlehem, 5.
 1739, Sharon, 5.
 1740, Chester, 1.
 1741, Oxford, 1.
 1743, Roxbury, 4.
 1744, Middletown, 4.
 1747, Andover, 3.
 1747, Marlborough, 1 or 2.
 1752, Brooklyn, 4.
 1754, New Britain, 1.
 1759, Bethel, 5.
 1762, Bethany, 5.
 1767, Chatham, 1 or 2.
 1768, East Windsor, 3.
 1768, North Branford, 3.
 1768, East Hartford, 3.
 1777, Eastford, 3.
 1779, Washington, 2.
 1780, Watertown, 4.
 1784, Woodbridge, 2.
 1785, Berlin, 1.
 1785, Bristol, 1.(?)
 1786, Bozrah, 5.
 1786, Franklin, 2.
 1786, Hamden, 2.
 1786, Lisbon, 1.
 1786, Warren, 2.
 1786, Granby, 3.(?)
 1786, Hampton, 1 or 3.
 1786, Montville, 4 and 2.
 1787, Weston, 4.
 1788, Brookfield, 2.
 1789, Huntington, 2.
 1790, Middlebury, 4.
 1794, Sterling, 2.
 1795, Plymouth, 3.
 1796, Wolcott, 2.
 1797, Trumbull, 2.
 1800, Bridgeport, 4.
 1801, Waterford, 4.
 1802, Sherman, 2.
 1803, Bridgewater, 4.
 1804, Columbia, 2.
 1806, Burlington, 3.(?)
 1806, Canton, 1.
 1806, West Hartford, 3.
 1808, Vernon, 3.
 1809, Chaplin, 2.
 1810, Westbrook, 3.
 1813, North Canaan, 3.
 1815, Griswold, 2.
 1816, East Lyme, 3.
 1820, Darien, 3.
 1820, Essex, 4.
 1822, East Granby, 3.

1822, Orange, 2.
 1823, Manchester, 1.
 1823, Monroe, 2.
 1826, Madison, 2.
 1827, Prospect, 4.
 1830, Avon, 1.
 1831, Plainville, 4.
 1833, Windsor Locks, 3.
 1835, Bloomfield, 3 or 4.
 1835, Westport, 4.
 1838, Ledyard, 2.
 1838, Clinton, 2 or 3.
 1841, Portland, 1.

1844, Naugatuck (Indian).
 1845, Easton, 3.
 1845, South Windsor, 3.
 1850, Seymour, 2.
 1851, Cromwell, 2.
 1852, Old Saybrook, 3.
 1855, Old Lyme, 3.
 1855, Putnam, 2.
 1856, Beacon Falls, 4.
 1859, Morris, 2.
 1861, Sprague, 2.
 1866, Thomaston, 2.